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ABSTRACT

Developed by the Academic Senate Educational Policies Committee, this document focuses on program discontinuance issues faced by local academic senates. Addressed foremost is the need to identify key factors for developing a fair, equitable, and faculty-driven program discontinuance process. Although college districts are required by current regulations and statutes to develop a process for program discontinuance and minimum criteria for the discontinuance of occupational programs, most districts do not have a process agreed upon by the local academic senate and the board. Rather, programs have been terminated using singular approaches that have been inconsistent. Because of the lack of agreed-upon processes, the Academic Senate has passed two resolutions, S94 8.5 and S96 9.0, both of which are described. The current regulation and statute also are discussed, as are the roles of local academic senates, effects on students, the need to balance the college curriculum, educational and budget planning issues, collective bargaining concerns, and considerations when developing a local model. The conclusion contains a set of recommendations to local senates on key factors required for effective participation in the program discontinuance process and suggestions for regulation changes. (AS)

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Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective

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Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

Adopted Spring 1998

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ABSTRACT

Increased attention has been given to program discontinuance. Local senates have looked to the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges for direction. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the many issues of program discontinuance faced by local academic senates. The paper addresses the need to identify key factors for developing a fair, equitable, and faculty driven program discontinuance process.

The paper, developed by the Academic Senate Educational Policies Committee, reviews the current regulation and statute, role of local academic senates, effects on students, the need to balance the college curriculum, educational and budget planning issues, collective bargaining concerns, and considerations when developing a local model.

The paper concludes with a set of recommendations to local senates on the key factors for effective participation in the program discontinuance process and recommendations for regulation changes.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past four years, the Academic Senate, through resolutions, has called for increased attention to program discontinuance. This paper focuses on the many issues of program discontinuance faced by local academic senates. Although college districts are required by current regulation and statute to develop a process for program discontinuance and minimum criteria for the discontinuance of occupational programs, most districts do not have a process agreed-upon by the local academic senate and the board. Rather, programs have been terminated using singular approaches which have been inconsistent. Because of the lack of agreed-upon processes, the Academic Senate has passed two resolutions, S94 8.5 and S96 9.0:

S94 8.5 Program Discontinuance Policies

Whereas economic pressures are causing widespread consideration of program elimination, and

Whereas data identifying programs eliminated and the reasons for elimination can be useful for development of strategies to address program elimination,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to collect data identifying programs eliminated by individual community colleges and the reasons(s) for elimination, and

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate for California community colleges direct the Executive Committee to research program discontinuance policies and procedures, and

Be it finally resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to develop a position paper with recommendations concerning implementing local program discontinuance policies.

S96 9.0 Program Discontinuation

Whereas vocational and academic programs are sometimes threatened with termination through faculty retirements and economics, and

Whereas many colleges are not in compliance with Title 5 Sections 55800 and 55810 which require local boards to adopt procedures for program termination and file them with the Chancellor's Office, and

Whereas UC and CSU require a system wide approval of program termination, and

Whereas there is a need to develop clear regulations for termination of programs,

Therefore be it resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges direct the Executive Committee to work with the Chancellor's Office to develop standards and regulations for program termination.

Ideas and recommendations contained in this document represent a culmination of efforts to address program discontinuance, including breakouts at the Academic Senate Spring 1996 and Fall 1997 Plenary Sessions, draft documents initiated and reviewed by the Educational Policies and Curriculum Committees, discussions with California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) colleagues, and review of local district processes.

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

In Spring 1996 the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted a paper entitled *Program Review: Developing a Faculty Driven Process.* Although thorough in its information and scope, the program review paper purposely did not address issues of program discontinuance. There has been an increasing demand from local senates for direction from the Academic Senate concerning program discontinuance. A process separate from that of program review is needed for two reasons: 1) because program improvement is distinct from considerations of discontinuance; and 2) because program discontinuance is both academic and professional for local academic senates and a matter for collective bargaining. Regulation requires that a consultation process be developed by districts to address program discontinuance. There are policies and procedures being used, but most colleges do not have anything in writing which includes faculty participation, therefore information concerning these processes is not readily available to faculty. Of those districts that do have these policies in writing, the board policies are often skeletal in nature and lack necessary detail.

While some colleges may have program discontinuance processes, there is no central repository. These processes are not available from the Chancellor's Office. Since system data is not available, an informal survey of local academic senates conducted at the Fall 1997 Plenary Session (Appendix A), found that only 7 of 62 college responding had a discontinuance policy. Without formal policies arrived at by collegial consultation and/or collective bargaining in place, program discontinuance is bound to occur on an ad hoc, and usually administratively driven, basis. Because program discontinuance is a curricular, student success, and educational issue, local governing boards should consult collegially with their local academic senates in establishing policies and procedures for program discontinuance. Local academic senates need to identify key factors for developing a fair, equitable and faculty driven program discontinuance process. Below are a list of some factors to consider:

- Who should be involved and what are their roles in developing the process?
- What are the criteria for initiating the discontinuance process?
- How are programs to be identified and by whom?
- What are the effects on students and student success when a program is discontinued?
- What provisions can and should be made for students in progress to complete their training?
- How does the discontinuance of a program alter the comprehensiveness and balance of offerings across the college curriculum? Within the district?
- How does the program discontinuance process fit into the educational and budget planning process used at the institution?
- What are the regional effects of program discontinuance?
- What are the effects on transfer to UC/CSU?
- What are the effects on local business and industries?

Current Regulation and Statute

It is important to realize how little Education Code and Title 5 Regulation exists regarding campus-wide program discontinuance. A review of current regulations illustrates that most program discontinuance deals with occupational education programs. The following are the current regulations and statutes:

Title 5 Regulation § 55130 Approval of Credit Programs

An approval is effective until the program or implementation of the program is discontinued or modified in any substantial way. From time to time the Chancellor may evaluate an educational program, after its approval, on the basis of factors listed in this section. If on the basis of such an evaluation the Chancellor determines that an educational program should no longer be offered, the Chancellor may terminate the approval and determine the effective date of termination.

Title 5 Regulation § 51022 Instructional Program

The governing board of each community college district shall, no later than July 1, 1984, develop, file with the Chancellor, and carry out its policies for the establishment, modification, or discontinuance of courses or programs. Such policies shall incorporate statutory responsibilities regarding vocational or occupational training program review as specified in Section 78016 of the Education Code.

Education Code § 78016 Review of program; termination

(a) Every vocational or occupational training program offered by a community college district shall be reviewed every two years by the governing board of the district to assure that each program, as demonstrated by the California Occupational Labor Market Information System, including the State-Local Cooperative Labor Market Information Program established in

Section 10533 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, or if this program is not available in the labor market area, other available sources of labor market information, does all of the following:

(1) Meets a documented labor market demand.
(2) Does not represent unnecessary duplication of other manpower training programs in the area.
(3) Is of demonstrated effectiveness as measured by the employment and completion success of its students.

(b) Any program that does not meet the requirements of subdivision (a) and the standards promulgated by the governing board shall be terminated within one year.

(c) The review process required by this section shall include the review and comments by the County Private Industry Council established pursuant to Division 8 (commencing with Section 15000) of the Unemployment Insurance Code, which review and comments shall occur prior to any decision by the appropriate governing body.

(d) The provisions of this section shall apply to each program commenced subsequent to July 28, 1983.

MAJOR ISSUES

Role of the Local Academic Senate

The involvement of the local academic senate is critical to the successful development and implementation of the program discontinuance policy. Local academic senate involvement offers a greater opportunity to create a collegial, student-centered, faculty driven, academically relevant process for the termination of college programs. Local academic senates, in concert with collective bargaining agents, should see their role as an opportunity to eliminate inconsistent and inappropriate characteristics associated with program discontinuance. Through an organized resolution process or the development of a position paper, the local academic senate needs to lead in developing a well defined, educationally sound program discontinuance policy that can affect one of the most important processes for defining the balance of a college curriculum and the future of students' educational pursuits. The local academic senate needs to be especially involved and assist faculty in related disciplines when no full time faculty are present.

Effects on Students

Students are typically most affected by the discontinuance of a program. They will be faced with issues of program completion and access when a program has been eliminated. Steps must be

taken to ease the impact on them. Optimally, if a program is going to be phased out, it should be done so that students currently taking courses can finish the program over the one or two year duration needed for the certificate or degree. Every effort should be made to place students in comparable programs at neighboring institutions. If no other programs are available, the college should assist students in revising their educational goals. When a program is discontinued, the college should make every effort to accept the credits earned by students in the discontinued discipline and apply those credits to a related discipline in order to prevent the students from having to once again start their education at the beginning.

Program discontinuance directly impacts student success. If a program is earmarked for discontinuance, analysis needs to be done to evaluate how the student equity ratios across the college are affected. Discontinuing programs in subject areas which greatly serve underrepresented and female students will adversely affect access for those groups. Specific counseling services for affected students need to be immediately available. The college student equity report needs to be consulted and changes made during the research phase when at-risk programs are identified for program discontinuance.

If a college is using low student enrollment as a key reason for identifying at-risk programs, and an occupational program identified as at-risk happens to enroll high percentages of women, many of whom are underrepresented, the local academic senate should carefully evaluate the causes of low enrollment. If pedagogical or curricular issues are found to be factors in the low enrollment, every effort should be made to encourage the discipline faculty to make the necessary changes. Also, the college should ensure that faculty have the necessary instructional support and equipment to keep the program current and vibrant.

Balancing the College Curriculum

One of the most difficult issues facing the discontinuance of a program is the balance of course offerings across the curriculum. Class cancellation and the redistribution of full time equivalent faculty (FTEF) funds has a similar effect on an institution as discontinuing a program. High costs and/or low enrollment are typical reasons why colleges redistribute FTEF, and those funds typically go to subject areas that show potential for growth. Without a comprehensive plan for program discontinuance, some department offerings across the curriculum can become unusually deflated to the point that students cannot make reasonable progress toward program completion, hence de facto program discontinuance has occurred.

The college mission statement and educational master plan need to be used as a basis for deciding the direction of instructional spending. Local labor market and community needs must also be reflected in the development of an effective program discontinuance process.

The college needs to take care to ensure that it offers a comprehensive set of offerings. The mix of programs must address the multiple missions of California Community Colleges, and thus

include an appropriate mix of vocational, basic skills and transfer courses. Program offerings need to be made available in sufficient numbers and at appropriate times to match student demand and allow students to make reasonable progress toward program completion. While colleges do need to balance relatively higher cost programs (such as equipment intensive vocational programs or advanced courses in a major sequence) with lower cost ones (such as most liberal arts courses), the college must protect the student's ability to transfer in a range of majors or choose to pursue employment in a range of locally available occupations. A well balanced curriculum is central to making access to meaningful employment or transfer a reality in any given community.

Educational and Budget Planning

Community college educational planning requires that the college examine what it does and how that compares to a forecast of what is needed in the future. As stated in the Academic Senate's paper *Program Review: Developing a Faculty Driven Process*,

> "...we see enrollments decreasing in course A and wait lists growing in course B so we offer fewer of A and more of B. But planning asks why these changes are occurring, whether the condition can be changed by the college and the faculty, and what is to be done."

A comprehensive program discontinuance process should help answer such questions. Scarce resources and growing student populations compel us to focus on difficult questions. Which programs deserve additional staff, equipment, or supply budgets? Which programs must be reconstructed to more effectively meet student needs? Which programs, as determined through an appropriate process, are not needed? Faculty should and must become involved in asking these kinds of questions. The colleges and the surrounding community cannot afford to be without the knowledge and expertise of the faculty on these important planning issues.

Steps taken to identify and then strengthen at-risk programs should be implemented before action on discontinuance is taken. These actions should constitute a plan developed jointly by discipline faculty and the local academic senate. For occupational programs, the advisory committee should be intimately involved in the construction of this plan. The following actions might be considered for:

Low growth/low enrollment problems

- active recruitment of targeted populations
- cooperative ventures with local employers, transfer institutions, and/or other community colleges
- enhanced career and academic counseling services (career/transfer center, job fairs, transfer day, etc.)

- adjustment of course scheduling: times of day, block scheduling, short courses, frequency and number of sections, open entry/open exit
- analysis of demand for the program through use of labor market information which may result in curriculum modifications such as adding options for higher demand specialties
- articulation of programs/courses: K-12, Tech Prep, etc., and a four-year sequencing of offerings to ensure student ability to transition to subsequent levels

Low retention/persistence/completion problems

- faculty development in classroom techniques such as addressing alternative learning styles, student course contracts and classroom research
- analysis of the curriculum to ensure alignment of course outcomes with next-course entry skills in sequences
- enhanced student support services: tutoring, financial aid, learning/study skills, child care, etc.

Analysis of program resources including

- adequate faculty, both in numbers of full-time faculty and in their particular expertise (use of faculty development or sabbatical resources may be appropriate)
- sufficient physical resources including facilities, equipment, and supplies
- appropriate levels of outside support such as classified staff, course offerings, library materials, and work place learning opportunities.

Central to developing this plan is a formal link to the budget process. Often at-risk programs can be strengthened if proper support is given to enable the program to retool and adapt to changing market conditions. Funds needed for strengthening at-risk programs should be identified and prioritized within the college's annual budget. A policy should be established through collegial consultation with the local academic senate that outlines the process for developing the plan. The implemented plan should be monitored by annual compilations of data and accompanying narrative analysis by program faculty. This analysis should serve as a basis for mid-course corrections to the plan and budget changes, again overseen by the program discontinuance subcommittee. The plan should incorporate specific targets which can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions taken. It is important to note that these targets must include qualitative measures.

The community is best served when curriculum and educational plans drive the budget development process. Similarly, the budget cannot drive the program discontinuance plan. An institution must look to its mission statement, the local and regional labor market, and community needs in order to develop an effective program discontinuance process. For

occupational programs, local advisory committees can be utilized to clarify program strengths and weaknesses, to update offerings and to assess employer needs. For transfer and major programs, linkages to both K-12 and to four year colleges and universities can help strengthen and or access program potential.

REGIONAL ISSUES

Program termination has implications beyond the immediate boundaries of the community and extends into other neighboring geographical regions. When a program is put on at-risk status, an analysis should be initiated to determine the impact of terminating the program on the surrounding region. Consideration should be given to:

- need for workers in the region with skills taught in the program
- number of transfer slots available at four-year schools in the region
- availability of the program at other community colleges offering the major within the region
- collaboration with business and industry in the region to strengthen the program
- possibility of conjoint programs with other community colleges in the region
- possibility of directing students at regional community colleges not offering the program to enroll in the program at the target college
- effects on UC/CSU transfer students
- effects on local industry
- the impact on the transfer student's ability to complete specific lower division subject areas and general education requirements when eliminating a program
- the impact on local recruitment efforts by employers seeking to find individuals with entry level occupational skills

An institution's program offerings need to reflect a variety of local community and regional issues, many of which are reflected in the occupational skill needs of the area. Regional cooperation is essential to establishing and maintaining a skilled workforce. The limitation of program offerings to one specific college does not acknowledge the reality of our regionally based economy or of the scarce resources available to educational institutions. Program discontinuance discussions must include an assessment of the potential impact on the surrounding region. Larger geographical areas often rely on high profile occupational programs (i.e., Nursing, Dental, Business, Computer Technology) to satisfy the need for workers in the region.

Communication between discipline faculty within the neighboring region is essential prior to the discontinuance of a program. For occupational programs, it's a good idea to bring the issue before the Regional Occupational Education Deans who also review programs for program approval before they go to the Chancellor's Office. For transfer programs it is

important to consult with discipline faculty at neighboring community colleges as well as transfer institutions and explore possibilities, including cross enrollment opportunities. It is important to involve transfer center coordinators and consider transfer data and statistics which will prove valuable to any discussions.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ISSUES

Program discontinuance is an area where collaboration between local senates and unions is extremely important. Once a district decides to eliminate a particular kind of service, such as discontinuing a program, it is likely that the need for faculty services will also be affected. districts should have previously established program discontinuance processes. If not, local academic senates should work with their union colleagues to ensure that both academic and professional issues and collective bargaining issues in program discontinuance are clearly addressed. Past experience with program discontinuance has shown that the following collective bargaining issues need to be addressed in collaboration with the collective bargaining agents:

- **Adequate Notification to Affected Faculty**
  Section 87740 of the Education Code requires notification of impending termination. In cases of program discontinuance, longer phase out periods may be needed.

- **Availability of Retraining for Displaced Faculty**
  The District should recognize its investment in well-trained faculty and should offer faculty the opportunity for retraining if transfer is not possible.

- **Construction of Faculty Service Areas**
  As senate and union leaders consult to develop a plan for an effective program discontinuance process, a review of Faculty Service Areas (FSA) and placement of courses in disciplines is advisable. FSA's are established to provide flexibility and mobility of seasoned faculty to teach a variety of courses and at the same time to assure that well qualified instructors teach in each discipline. FSA's are to be identified within the current California community college's discipline list.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING A LOCAL MODEL

The development and implementation of a program discontinuance process should be considered within the context of the college mission statement, and should be linked with the college educational master plan and the department goals and objectives. Institutional planning processes is one of the eleven items on which local academic senates must be collegially consulted. Faculty involvement in the development of a program discontinuance process ensures respect for the goals of the process by faculty.

Criteria for Identifying At-risk Programs and Determine Research Needs

Given the diverse characteristics of our local colleges, a universal set of criteria for program discontinuance is not practical. Community colleges are specifically designed to meet the educational needs of the community. As communities drastically differ across the state, so do their community colleges. As local academic senates develop program discontinuance processes, they must consider the research needs and methodologies.

The criteria to identify at-risk programs should:

- be clearly stated
- contain uniform measures applied to all programs
- contain a specific set of measures for categories of programs, e.g., vocational, transfer, lab/studio/shop/clinical-based
- be based on trends over time, typically three to five years
- include a narrative analysis of each data element provided by program faculty
- relate both to program goals and the mission of the college
- identify definite steps to be taken to strengthen programs in an at-risk status

Qualitative Data

Qualitative outcomes are reflected in the spirit that animates classroom discussion, the values that are modeled in pedagogy, and the habits of mind of graduates.

Explicit attention should be given to qualitative aspects of the program. If the focus of the process is qualitative, less statistical and more value-laden assessment will be made. The quality of the breadth of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process should be taken into consideration. The student satisfaction and the quality of the program as perceived by them and the quality of the program as perceived by the articulating universities or employing business and industry, is a crucial factor in evaluating the program for effectiveness in serving the students and community. Local academic senates should develop the qualitative factors to be assessed.

Quantitative Data

The following criteria for identifying at-risk programs are suggestions only. Those actually included in the district program discontinuance process are subject to approval by the local governing board consulting collegially with its local academic senate. Key factor which may be used in identifying at-risk programs include:

- weak enrollment trend
- insufficient frequency of course section offerings to assure reasonable availability for students to complete the program within its stated duration
- poor retention within courses
- poor term-to-term persistence for those in courses in the major
- poor rate for student achievement of program goals (i.e., completion rate)
- lack of demand in the workforce or unavailability of the transfer major
- when the discipline is being considered for termination: decline in importance of service to those in related programs.

Local academic senates need to be concerned with the preoccupation of quantitative measures, particularly productivity. It is important to emphasize that quantitative data should not be presented without a narrative explanation nor should it be used for comparison among a college's programs. Such use would completely disregard the qualitative value of a program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Local Senates

Local academic senates need to identify key factors for effective faculty participation in the program discontinuance process. Below are a list of factors to consider.

1. Create a strong role for the advisory committees in occupational programs

2. Address regional issues including:
   - maintaining a skilled workforce in key occupations within a region
   - coordination with four-year transfer institutions to assure adequate articulation
   - availability of both lower and upper division courses in a major
   - availability of programs in the region and in the state

3. Resolve contractual issues for faculty in the affected programs:
   - well defined reduction-in-force procedures in the bargaining agreement
   - adequate notification to affected faculty
   - availability of retraining, including adequate resources, timelines, and target retraining discipline(s)
   - construction of faculty service areas to balance stability of faculty employment with program needs for qualified faculty

4. Create the opportunity for input from all affected groups
   - identify the process to be used in the development of a program discontinuance plan

- work with union colleagues to develop a fair and credible process
- use sound judgment in establishing a process that is open and collegial in the development of program discontinuance processes
- handle items under the strict scrutiny of the Brown Act with the proper notification, first reading, and second reading/action agenda items
- hold a full public meeting, with provision for public comment as designated by the local academic senate
- recommend a process that represents the informed and collective wisdom of the faculty

Recommendations for Regulation Changes

Title 5 § 55130 Approval of Credit Programs

An approval is effective until the program or implementation of the program is discontinued or modified in any substantial way. ~~From time to time the Chancellor may evaluate an educational program, after its approval, on the basis of factors listed in this section. If on the basis of such an evaluation the Chancellor determines that an educational program should no longer be offered, the Chancellor may terminate the approval and determine the effective date of termination.~~

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The governing board of each community college district shall, no later than July 1, ~~1984~~ 2000, develop in consultation with local academic senates, file with the Chancellor, and carry out its policies for the establishment, modification, or discontinuance of courses or programs. Such policies shall incorporate statutory responsibilities regarding vocational or occupational training program review as specified in Section 78016 of the Education Code.

Education Code § 78016 Review of program; termination

(a) Every vocational or occupational training program offered by a community college district shall be reviewed ~~every two years~~ by the governing board of the district to assure that each program, as demonstrated by the California Occupational Labor Market Information System, including the State-Local Cooperative Labor Market Information Program established in Section 10533 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, or if this program is not available in the labor market area, other available sources of labor market information, does all of the following:

(1) Meets a documented labor market demand.
(2) Does not represent unnecessary duplication of other manpower training programs in the area.

(3) Is of demonstrated effectiveness as measured by the employment and completion success of its students.

(b) Any program that does not meet the requirements of subdivision (a) and the standards promulgated by the governing board shall be terminated within one year.

(c) The review process required by this section shall include the review and comments by the County Private Industry Council established pursuant to Division 8 (commencing with Section 15000) of the Unemployment Insurance Code, which review and comments shall occur prior to any decision by the appropriate governing body.

(d) The provisions of this section shall apply to each program commenced subsequent to July 28, 1983.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Each institution needs to develop a process for program discontinuance that best addresses its educational master plan, program goals and objectives, and student access and success. Effective faculty participation and leadership is essential to the success of such a process.

Appendix A

ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
TURNAROUND SURVEY
Fall 1997 Plenary Session

PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

1. Has your college discontinued any occupational program in the last three years?

   Yes: 31 No: 33 Don't Know: 12

2. Does your college/district have a written policy for program discontinuance?

   Yes: 7 No: 31 Don't Know: 25

3. If programs have been discontinued, please list them:

Electronics (3)	Welding (2)	Court Reporting
Drafting (4)	Apparel Design	Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
Technical Illustration	Mgt. Of Manufacturing	Travel & Tourism (2)
Purchasing	Early Childhood Ed.	Dry Cleaning (2)
Motorcycle Repair	Tech. Theater	Design Technology
Model Building	Environmental Tech (2)	Aviation Maintenance
Horticulture	Court Reporting	Technical Illustration
General Clerical	Watch Repair	Sprinkler Design
Arch. Design (2)	Interior Design (2)	Food Preparation
Petroleum Tech.	Broadcasting	Journalism
Office Management	Photography	

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